

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED IN THE
CHAPEL of the ASYLUM
F O R
FEMALE ORPHANS,

A T T H E
Anniversary Meeting of the GUARDIANS,
On FRIDAY the Sixteenth of MAY, 1766.

Published at their Request, and for the sole Benefit of the
C H A R I T Y.

By the Rev. JAMES HALLIFAX, D. D.
Rector of *Cbeddington, Bucks*, and Vicar of *Ewell*, in
the County of *Surry*.

L O N D O N:

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D.DCC.LXVI.

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The READER is desired to correct the following errors of the press.

Page 5, line 6, for *earlier*, read *early*; page 6, line 30, for *easy*, read *easily*; page 8, line 4, for *motive*, read *motives*; page 11, line 11, for *doth*, read *doeth*; page 12, line 21, for *husband*, read *household*; page 13, line 18, for *framing*, read *hearing*; page 14, line 6, for *Pharaoh*, read *Pharaoh*.



T O H E R

GRACIOUS MAJESTY the QUEEN,

M A D A M,

AS the President and Guardians of these poor Female Orphans, have requested the publication of the following Sermon; and as YOUR MAJESTY hath graciously condescended to distinguish it with a much higher mark of honour, in permitting it to be inscribed to yourself; this recommendation will be the most likely to secure to it such a favourable reception from the press, as it could not have claimed from any intrinsic merit. Should even the meanest parent find in it such instruction, as may prove of use to him, in so important a concern, as that of a right education of his child, the author will think, that his Time has been well employed: But if it should, upon the Perusal,

DEDICATION.

usal, suggest to YOUR MAJESTY, the most distant hint that may deserve your attention, in training up those royal pledges of conjugal affection, whose mental faculties, gradually expanding themselves, must afford a pleasing prospect to a person of YOUR MAJESTY's nice observation, and cannot but sweeten the few retired moments allotted to regal dignity; this will be a sufficient reward, and a singular satisfaction to him who is, with the utmost deference,

YOUR MAJESTY'S

Most obedient, and

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Most humble servant,

*Ewell, in Surry,
June 11, 1766.*

JAMES HALLIFAX.

PROVERBS XXIX. Ver. xv.

*The Rod and Reproof give Wisdom, but a Child left
to himself bringeth his Mother to Shame.*

THE state of infancy is so exceedingly helpless, and the natural inclinations of the human being are so much corrupted by original sin, that, without some tender hand to supply the wants of the body, and some faithful instructor to admonish and correct us in the beginning of life, it will be hardly possible to subdue our vicious appetites and passions, or to perfect those good inclinations, which are intended as incentives to virtuous actions. The heathen world had a sensible feeling of these infirmities, although they could not clearly account for them; and as an assistance to their offspring, many of the wisest amongst them laid down certain rules of moral instruction, in proportion to the degrees of knowledge bestowed on them by the supreme author, and giver of wisdom. But these men, wanting the light of divine revelation, could lead on their children to no higher attainments in morality and virtue, than what natural reason, long experience, and parental affection reached out to them. They could only procure to themselves and their posterity, some temporal advantages respecting the present life; but their superior penetration afforded them no certain

B insight

insight into the blessings of futurity. The author of the text did enjoy the light of revelation, tho' not in its meridian lustre; and from thence was enabled to set before mankind clearer and better rules of morality and virtue, and higher notions of the deity, than the wisest of the heathen could teach their disciples. The title of the book from whence these words are taken, is that of † *The Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel*, a royal author peculiarly celebrated for his wisdom; and the great end proposed, in writing these excellent rules for the conduct of human life, is declared to be * *to know wisdom and instruction, to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion*. Great however as these advantages were for the ‡ *training up the child in the way he should go*, yet to christians, who have the gospel for their guide, it may truly be said, when they search into this perfect rule of righteousness, behold a greater than Solomon is here. In this they are instructed by the Saviour of the world, who came not to destroy any moral duties already inculcated, but to carry them to the highest degrees of perfection attainable by man in his present condition. Herein also we are furnished with a remedy against the many evils arising from that natural corruption, which both heathen and christian derive from the transgression of their first parents. And indeed the curse denounced against the woman, immediately after the fall, † *that God would greatly multiply her sorrow in bringing forth children*, seems, in the event at least, to extend to both parents. The constant care and anxiety necessary to sustain the feeble state of infancy, and that seasonable correction and reproof, which both father and mother must sometimes exercise over their children, in order to check the impetuous sallies and eager passions of youth, may be considered as one species of punishment for original sin. For while natural

† Prov. chap. i. v. 1.

* Verses 2d, 4th.

‡ Prov. xxii. 6.

† Gen. iii. 15.

affection restrains the hand, and prudence commands to take hold of the rod, such a conflict arises in the breast of the parent, as will occasion great pain and misgiving of heart. But, grievous as these trials are, they must sometimes be submitted to, that the tender mind may be properly formed by wholesome discipline, and virtue cultivated by an earlier care.—*For the rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame;* in discoursing upon which words, I shall take occasion to shew

FIRST, The necessity of early instruction; and

SECONDLY, The unhappy consequences generally arising from a neglect of education, and the interesting motives to a faithful discharge of this duty.

Had man continued innocent, the increase of his species might have been without labour and sorrow; and every human being, like Adam, might have come into life in full proportion of body and extent of reason. But now the case is widely different; even the Saviour of the world, who was born to redeem us from original sin, when considered with respect to his human nature, was a babe in swaddling clothes, trained up in subjection to his parents, and increased, like other men, *in wisdom and stature*. Nay, so very helpless is the state of infants, that the lamb amidst the flock is, in many instances, more capable of sustaining itself, than the child in the cradle. The strictest attention must be paid to their several wants, if we desire to see * *our sons like young plants*, vigorous, active, and blooming in youth, and producing all the desirable fruits of cultivation when ripened into manhood. Our daughters too will but ill resemble *the polished corners of the temple*, unless they are carefully built up by the strictest rules of modesty, elegance, and propriety: but when these

* Psalm clxiv. 12,

ornaments are united with sentiments and manners, nobly refined by a judicious education, they may indeed fitly be compared to the angular pillars of a spacious temple or palace, framed with the greatest exactness, beautifully adorned and polished by the exquisite art of the builder.

One strong argument, among many other which might be brought in proof of natural corruption, is the early glimmerings of pride, anger, jealousy, and several other passions discernible in infants. All these are evident marks of original sin. Virtue, or vice, cannot indeed become habitual till the human being hath attained to a capacity of exerting its reason; neither can actual sin be imputed till the soul is able to distinguish between good and evil. But vicious or virtuous habits are very soon contracted, and when they have insinuated themselves, and, by repeated practice, have secured a sort of acquiescence of the mind, they become as firmly rooted as natural inclinations; and, for this reason, habit has always been considered as a second nature. From hence therefore arises the great necessity of *gaining over* the child to the side of virtue, before the lust of the eye and the pride of life can have so artfully placed their snares, as to entrap unguarded innocence. The first dawnings of reason must not be neglected; knowledge must be taught to ** them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts; precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little*, even before the understanding can reach to the end of the prospect placed in view; before the faithful guide can distinctly open, to the tender mind, all the advantages occasionally springing up, whilst he leads his pupil thro' the paths of religion and virtue. The more pliant the branch, the more easy it will bow down to the hand, and the better it will grow in the direction given to it. There is also an innocent inquisitiveness in children, which strongly inclines them to catch at instruction; and

* Isaiah, xxviii. 9, 10.

as this time of life is usually the most open, and freest from suspicion, so is it best adapted to hear, and give credit to useful information. A more advanced age is attended with caution, the approaches towards manhood are guarded. Where early education has been neglected, and erroneous principles and prejudices have been imbibed, from evil communications or unjust observation, a perverse disposition will sometimes shut its eyes against conviction, and obstinately adhere to a cause which the understanding is not able to defend. Can any parent then, who lives in the full light of the Gospel, and is sensible of the inestimable privileges of christianity, think it sufficient to be the mere instrument of existence to his child? can the religion he professes, or the natural tenderness he feels for his own offspring, suffer him to leave a helpless being floating on the ocean of life without a pilot to steer him thro' raging passions, and to direct him with safety to the haven where he should go? He that makes no better provision for *his own house, † hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* The heathen had much higher notions than these of the obligations he lay under. He looked upon instruction as the best proof of parental affection, declaring him who taught the infant to be more a father than he who begat him. Here then let the heathen teach the christian knowledge; let the professor of christianity know that the other did his best for his child, according to the talents which God had entrusted him with; and let the man who possesses the treasures of the Gospel go, *and do likewise.* Let him be assiduous not only to secure the body from diseases and intemperance, but let him shield the soul also from the infectious breath of corrupt men; let him instil honest principles into the tender mind, and accustom it, from the first essays of reason, to the practice of true religion and virtue. This is a debt due from parents to their offspring, to themselves, and to the public; which

† 1 Tim. v. 8.

will be evident, when our attention is carried to the next particular under consideration ; namely,

The unhappy consequences generally arising from a neglect of education, and the interesting motive to a faithful discharge of this duty. If this point be considered as it relates to the child, it is almost an inevitable source of misery to him. For he who hath no instructor in the paths of virtue, will not want a master to lead him into vicious courses. Thorns and thistles will spring up without the pains of culture, but the wholesome bread which nourisheth us must be procured by labour and industry. The same will be the effect of natural corruption in the human heart. It will spontaneously dictate evil thoughts, and these will readily lead on to evil actions, if an early instruction doth not convince the mind that the great business of life is to correct our vicious inclinations, and to cultivate what is good in us. His condition therefore must be deplorable, who is left destitute of information and assistance, at that important period, when the rational faculty of the soul is ready to exert itself in words and actions ; when the wax is prepared for any impression ; when the dawn of the understanding longs to burst out into light, and is not sufficient, of itself, to make virtue or vice its choice, much less to look forward to future advantages or dangers. In distress like this, can a woman so entirely shake off the parent as not to have compassion on the son of her womb ? can a father so far divest himself of all that is rational, religious, or manlike, as to suffer his own offspring to wander in perplexity, thro' the labyrinth of this world, without any clue to lead him on with safety to that happy eternity for which his heavenly father intended him ? a child thus left to himself must not only bring his mother to shame, but himself to misery. His parents, from their own cruel conduct, may justly expect to see a tender plant drowned in wine, and enervated with intemperance, before it shall have reached to a state of maturity.

But

But supposing parents so far to want natural affection as to be capable of this cruelty, yet self-love seems to be a sufficient incentive to the discharge of this important trust. For, besides the account they must give of their neglect at a future day of retribution, there are several worldly motives to prompt them to a due care of their offspring. It often happens, not in old age alone, but from a variety of sudden diseases, which attack both body and mind, that men of the brightest intellects and strongest constitutions become as childish and helpless, before their retreat out of life, as when they first came into it. Under these circumstances, parents will hardly ever fail to find the kindest assistance from those children who have been instructed in a becoming sense of their duty. When distresses like these happen to a family firmly united in affection, the manly strength of a son, trained up in sobriety and temperance, will strenuously sustain the tottering limbs of an afflicted father; his virtue, his good sense, his truly christian principles will all be exerted to defend from treachery and injustice, those feeble intellects which sickness or extreme old age have brought back to a second childhood. When this pleasing scene of filial piety is made still more endearing by the fond soothings and delicate sensibility of a dutiful daughter, such good and wise children, must needs make a glad father, he must, in the midst of his infirmities, find sincere comfort, and sink calmly into eternity; and the heart of the mother will leap for joy, and be amply rewarded for all the pain and anxiety, all the vigilance and care, which she had undergone for them in their early years.

As another interesting motive, more especially regarding persons in eminent stations, it may be observed that a religious and virtuous education are the most likely means of satisfying a laudable desire of securing their honours and possessions to succeeding generations; so far, I mean, as is in the power of human foresight to defend such precarious tenures. High birth does not necessarily produce great and good actions,

tions, any more than a rich soil will spontaneously yield the finest fruits; neither hath the new-born infant of a princess any essential marks of distinction from that of a peasant. Both come into the world with a rational soul, both are organized and fashioned with limbs and features equally expressive of the same species of beings. It must therefore be from a right application of those adventitious aids, which rank and fortune afford, that the infant of high birth is to stand distinguished from the other, when he attains the age of manhood. But should these advantages be misapplied or neglected, all secular goods are so very fluctuating, especially where the probable method of retaining them is despised, that the mighty may sink down from his seat, and the man of low degree may be exalted. Were the riches and honours of this world unalienable, the stream of life would stagnate and grow quite corrupt; but as the various blessings of it are continually flowing from hand to hand, this is a spur to industry and virtue, to use every honest method to take hold of them as they pass along the current. From hence it is evident that all external splendor, when viewed in a proper light, is in reality but an accidental appendage to any man, and so far from constituting the essence of his nature, that it hangs as loosely about it as the several robes and symbols by which the different orders and degrees of nobility are distinguished. The consideration of this should excite those, who wish to deliver down their honours and possessions to posterity, to be careful to train up their children in such principles as are truly great and good; that when they are called forth into life, and are expected to exert their talents for the welfare and support of their king and country; their own virtuous deeds, and not merely those of their ancestors, may give a real lustre to their titles, and become the truest heralds of their nobility.

Besides these incentives, which nearly affect both parents and children, when considered in a domestic view, the obligations we are under to the community should be another motive

tive to engage us to educate the younger members of it in religious and virtuous principles; from an assurance that this is the most solid and lasting basis for any government to build upon. It is a mark of an unsound head, or, at least, of a corrupt heart, to maintain that private vices are public benefits, and wicked instruments absolutely necessary to well ordered states. Those who adopt such pernicious principles would do well to consider, that the great God, who knoweth what is best for all the sons of men, hath himself no need of the sinful man; and though he often bringeth light out of darkness, and good out of evil, yet he never doth evil for the sake of an apparent good that may ensue, neither doth he allow any individual, or society of men, to commit a known sin, under pretence of its being a necessary means of obtaining some general good. In public authority, as well as in private stations, he that walketh uprightly walketh surely. Integrity is the most faithful guide to every man, and those who hold it fast to the end will always prove the best subjects to their king, and the truest friends to their country. To assert that an action in itself sinful, may, by gilding it over with the name of a pious or political fraud, become lawful to a community, and still remain criminal in private life, would be opening a gap for every species of perjury, rapine, and injustice. For what are public communities, but a multitude of private families, united into one civil society? and what doth the Lord require of them in this collective capacity? an obedience to the same universal law of righteousness, an observance of the very same duties which are required of individuals, namely, to † *do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.*

If therefore we would consult the real happiness and prosperity of any community, honesty will ever be the safest and wisest policy; and it will be our greatest interest to train up the rising generation in the ways of religion and virtue, from a full persuasion that * *righteousness exalteth a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people.*

† Micah, vi, 8.

* Prov. xiv, 34.

† *Hast thou then Children? Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth. Chasten thy son betimes + lest he wax stubborn, and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart. Hold him fast to labour, and industry, lest his lewd behaviour be an offence unto thee. * Hast thou daughters? have a care of their body, and shew no levity before them in thy words or actions. Be unto them a faithful guide, and teach them that the fear of the Lord and the keeping his commandments are the beginning and end of true wisdom; assure them that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is, in the sight of God and man, of great price; and such as holy women of old time adorned themselves with, and thought more graceful than Tyrian purple or the gold of Ophir, convince them that the innocent blush of modesty is more becoming than rubies; that chastity shines brighter and is of far greater value than all the jewels of the east; and that these graces and these ornaments are the best treasure to the happy man who findeth such a woman: || *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She will look well to the ways of her husband, her children will arise up, out of love and reverence, and call her blessed. For tho' favour be deceitful and beauty vain, that is, all those external accomplishments which recommend to favour may sometimes prove a deception, and the most perfect beauty will soon fade away; yet, the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised, her piety and virtue, shall appear conspicuous to the world, and shall receive the lasting praises of all her acquaintance.**

As the several particulars hitherto proposed to your consideration, seem sufficient to shew the necessity of an early education; the unhappy consequences of the neglect of it; and the interesting motives to a faithful discharge of this duty; your own reflections upon the subject will prompt you to compassionate these deserted orphans now placed in your view, who would have been destitute of all the means of

† Eccles. vii, 23. + Eccles. xxx, 12, 13. * Eccles. vii, 24.

|| Prov. xxxi, 11, 12, 28, 29, 30.

instruction,

instruction, had they not been taken under the protection of this charity, which has been so judiciously calculated to guard the infant mind from the first contagion of sin, and the fatal effects of deserted indigence. The wise Solon * observing that the liberty and other emoluments which were enjoy'd at Athens, prov'd the occasion of drawing thither a great concourse of people from other parts; and having a foresight of the bad consequences that must ensue, if some means were not devised to make these people industrious, vested the court of Areopagus with a power of examining how people lived, and of punishing idleness. The same motives may perhaps have drawn together the vast conflux of inhabitants round about our Athens, and the train of vices generally attendant on idleness and neglected poverty, may have been the occasion of exercising the heads of men of discernment, and opening the hands of beneficence to guard against these evils; lest like the Athenians †, *wholly employed in framing or telling some new thing*, we should wanton with law and liberty to the confusion of the state. Among several other excellent plans formed with this view, the charitable institution, which we are now assembled to promote, seems to have a claim to particular regard. And indeed it hath already received the highest marks of recommendation and honour, in having been taken under the patronage of a Gracious Queen, who, whilst she discharges the duties of a faithful partner in the throne, and an affectionate mother of princes, is attentive to the wants of the meanest of her sex, and cheerfully stretches out her hand to relieve the wretched condition of these female orphans, who on account of their tender years, timorous sex, and destitute circumstances, must have been exposed to almost inevitable perdition, had they not fled for refuge within these walls. Besides being thus royally patronized, many nobles, and eminent persons of both sexes, have charitably taken upon themselves the guardianship of these poor outcasts, to deliver them from the hands of the ungodly, and to shelter them from those filthy harpies, whose professed employment is the seduction of unprotected innocence.

* Univerf. Hist. vol. 6, pag. 312, octavo.

† Acts, xvii, 21.

Look back then, ye happy children, to the pit of sin and misery, from which you have been rescued, and send forth from your hearts the sincerest thanksgivings to your heavenly protector, and earthly benefactors, for having found here an Asylum to secure you from the vile attempts of these female monsters. The daughter of Pharoah king of Egypt saved the infant Moses from perishing by water; the charitable hand of a British Queen hath preserved you from the death of sin, and directed you in the way that leads to the life of righteousness. In this comfortable retreat, you have the means of better instruction in religion, in honesty, in sobriety, in chastity, in industry, and temperance, than you could possibly have received under the protection of your natural parents. Let it then be your earnest endeavour to reap every advantage of this charitable institution, by a diligent observance of the duties enjoined you. The most satisfactory return you can make for this unforeseen succour, will be to convince your benefactors, by your future conduct in life, that you have made a right application of the wholesome lessons here inculcated. You will soon be sent out into an ensnaring world, beware therefore of the gawdy temptations which profligate and artful seducers may offer, in hopes of betraying you to sin. Let the words of Solomon remind you that *the fairest woman without discretion, is as a jewel in a swine's snout*; and be assured that the poorest woman living, whilst she retains her virtue and integrity, will have a constant source of comfort in her own mind, be a crown to her husband, and a blessing to her offspring.

Therefore *keep innocence, and take heed to the thing that is right*, and though you may meet with many struggles and difficulties in your way through life, yet *this will bring you peace at the last.*

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